



**Connecticut General Assembly
Before the Joint Committee on Energy and Technology**

Written Testimony of Vote Solar

Regarding SB 394 – An Act Concerning Virtual Net Metering and Certain Zero or Low Emission Generation Projects.

Sean Garren, Regional Manager - Northeast

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Thank you Senator Doyle and Representative Reed, Members of the Committee:

I am here today to testify **in support** of Raised Bill SB 394 and to support an amendment. I will try to be brief.

Quick background on Vote Solar - we are a non-profit, non-partisan grassroots organization with members throughout the U.S. including thousands in Connecticut. Since 2002, we've worked in more than 20 states to remove market barriers and implement policies needed to bring solar into the mainstream.

We support SB 394, because it would expand access to solar, and the cost savings and tax and lease income, for more municipal customers. The Virtual Net Metering program in Connecticut has already saved many municipalities thousands of dollars on their electric bills and generated new income for them. At a time when many towns and cities are struggling with tight budgets, this program is a critical lifeline for communities. The flexibility to site projects some distance from their electric demand can reduce the cost of solar for municipalities, allow for siting on ideal land like landfills, and offset the hardest hit electric bills, like schools.

While allowing 'stranded' projects to move forward is laudable, it is important to note that this program could be expanded across the state without a cap, and the benefits to ratepayers and taxpayers would far exceed any costs of the program. Neighboring states such as Massachusetts and New York have proven this model for solar development on a statewide scale. As with the Shared Clean Energy Facilities pilot program, Connecticut is behind many of its peers in expanding access to solar to more of its citizens. This has left many in Connecticut – municipalities without the proper roof space for solar or renting or multi-family home residents - without the same opportunities.

Finally, we support the amendment to SB 394 suggested by Paul Michaud from the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Business Association (REEBA), Dan Bosley from the Northeast Clean Energy Council (NECEC) and David Schatz from SolarCity. This amendment would eliminate

the permitting requirement for 'stranded' projects, which would prove too onerous for most or all such projects.

I thank the Committee for continuing their support of solar development and look forward to working with you to build a competitive and thriving solar market in Connecticut.

Vote Solar

89 South St., Suite 203, Boston, MA 02111
360 22nd St., Suite 730, Oakland, CA 94612
www.votesolar.org